

TERENCE HECYRA

PROLOGUE

Hecyra is the title of this play:

When it was first presented, on that day

There came about a new calamity

Whereby the audience could not thoroughly

Witness or judge it – they were mesmerized

With some rope-dancing. Now it's been revised

Entirely. The playwright would not show

The play upon the stage once more and so

Will sell it possibly. Each other play

You've seen before: now look at this, I pray.

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SECOND PROLOGUE

I'll speak this prologue: grant, accordingly,

Good fortune that the same immunity

I had when I was young I may possess

Today. In those days I would bring success

To new plays that had once been spurned: thereby

The writings of the poet would not die

Once *he* was dead. Caecilius' comedies

I learnt when they were new along with these:

Sometimes I failed, sometimes I held my own

With difficulty. It was clearly known

20

To me that fortune on the stage can be

Fickle, and therefore when uncertainty

Arose, I laboured hard, and so, when I
Began to act in them, I would thereby
Learn new ones from the poet zealously
And not divert him from his specialty,
And they got staged, well-liked when they were seen.

I thus restored the poet who had been,
Through the malevolence of his enemies,

Almost removed from his activities 30

In playwriting. But if I were to slight
Him at that time, discouraging him to write

So that he would have lived in lethargy,

I might have advised him equally

From writing other plays. And therefore pay

Attention to what I have got to say,

And be impartial. *Hecyra* once more

I bring, a play I never was before

Allowed to act in silence, for the play

Was cursed. Your intellect, though, will allay 40

The curse, if it will aid my toil. When I

Began to act, I was so baffled by

The vaunts of boxers and the expectation

Of rope-dancers and the congregation,

The noise, the women's shrieks, that I would leave

Before the end. I've now tried to retrieve

An earlier play of mine, for I set out

Afresh and once more brought the play about.

The first act pleased, but in the meantime there

Came news that some gladiatorial fare 50

Was in the offing, and this rumour brought

The audience in flocks – they yelled, they fought
For seats, they rioted in disarray;
I could not keep my place there. But today
There is no riot, just serenity
And ease, and I’ve the opportunity
To act again, and you may now array
The scenic festival. And yet, I pray,
Do not permit dramatic art to be
Left to a few: let your authority 60
Be linked with mine. If I through avarice
Have never thought to set a price on this
Talent of mine but think the greatest gain
That I can hope for is to entertain
And please you, let me be assured that he
Who gave himself to your integrity
And toils in the protection I provide
May not be ridiculed on every side.
Thus for my sake listen attentively
That he may write more plays while, as for me, 70
I’ll be allowed to learn more plays: thus I
May be allowed to buy them by and by.

ACT I

SCENE I

Philotis:

Few lovers to their mistresses, you’ll see,
Are constant: for example, constantly

Pamphilus with a solemn vow averred
To Bacchis – so that anyone who heard
Would think it true – that he'd not wed while she
Yet lived. But now he's wed!

Syra:

Accordingly

I earnestly implore you and advise

That you should pity none and vandalize

80

And plunder every man you meet.

Philotis:

What, all?

Syra:

That's right, for none of them will ever call

On you without preparing first to play

Upon your feelings, thus to have his way

With you at slight expense. So why don't you

Conspire against *them*?

Philotis:

But it's wrong to do

Damage to all.

Syra:

You say it's wrong to make

Reprisal on your enemies or take

Them in the way they take you? Why should you

And I not share our looks and points of view?

90

SCENE II

Parmeno [to Scirtus, within]:

If the old man should come and ask for me,
Say I've gone to the port to try to see
If Pamphilus has come. What have I said,
Scirtus? If he asks for me, go ahead
And say that; if he doesn't, do not say
A word, that at some other time I may
Use that excuse again. But do I see
My dear Philotis? How's it come to be
That she's here? [to Philotis] Philotis, a warm good-day
To you.

Philotis:

My greetings, Parmeno.

Syra:

I say!

100

Good-day.

Parmeno:

Good-day. [to Philotis] Now tell me, where have you
Been making merry all this time?

Philotis:

Not true.

I've not been having fun in any way:

I left for Corinth where I had to stay
With a foul captain, and for two years there
I languished.

Parmeno:

Well, I fancy that your care
For Athens held you often and you thought
But poorly of an enterprise that caught
You in its trap.

Philotis:

Indeed I cannot say

How eager I have been to get away 110

From him and come back here that I might see

You once again, enjoying tranquilly,

As once I did, the parties that we'd hold.

Unless at certain moments, I was told,

Or if he chose the subject I should say

Not one word.

Parmeno:

Hardly gallant, then, to stay

Your tongue!

Philotis:

But tell me what I heard in there [pointing to the house]

From Bacchis. It could never be, I'd swear,

That while she was alive he would not wed.

Parmeno:

Indeed.

Philotis:

But is it truly as she said? 120

Pameno:

Yes, but I doubt the marriage will endure.

Philotis:

May all the gods and goddesses ensure

It won't, for Bacchis' sake.

Parmeno:

To dissipate

The news is pointless – don't interrogate

Me anymore about it.

Philotis:

Lest it be

Known widely, I suppose. Believe you me,

I do not ask you so that I may spread

The news abroad but so that in my head

I may rejoice.

Parmeno:

Whatever you may say

I'll never trust you.

Philotis:

Oh, don't speak that way,

130

As though you were more eager, Parmeno,

To tell this to me than I am to know

What I'm asking about.

Parmeno [to himself]:

Indeed that's true,

And that's my greatest failing. [to Philotis] Now, if you

Give me your word that you will never say

A word of it, I'll tell you right away.

Philotis:

That's more your style. I give my word. So speak!

Parmeno:

Listen.

Philotis:

I will.

Parmeno:

Their love was at its peak,

When Pamphilus' father urged his son to wed,

And, as it is with fathers, he then said

140

That he was aged now and Pamphilus
His only son, and so he hoped that thus
He'd have support in his old age. First he
Refused, but when his father urgently
Pressed him, he wavered back and forth – should he
Yield to his love or filial piety?
By hammering away, the old man gained
The upper hand and finally attained
For Pamphilus the child of our next-door
Neighbour. This did not seem unpleasant for 150
His son until close to the wedding-day
When he saw all prepared and no delay
Was possible: he was in such a mess
That even Bacchis, I would surely guess,
Would then have pitied him had she been there.
Whenever I was granted time to spare
And speak with him, he'd utter, "Parmeno,
What have I done to merit all this woe?
I've had it."

Philotis:

Laches, for this dreadful act

Damn you!

Parmeno:

In short, he wed her. No contact 160

He made with her upon the marriage-bed

That first night, nor the next.

Philotis:

What's that you said?

A young man, full of wine, lay with a lass –

A virgin! – and made not a single pass

At her? Nonsense! I don't believe it's true.

Parmeno:

I think you don't, but no-one comes to you

Reluctant to make love to you, but he

Had taken her to wife unwillingly.

Philotis:

Then what?

Parmeno:

He very soon took me aside,

Out of the house, and said he'd still denied 170

To touch her, but that he, before they wed,

Had hoped to tolerate the match. He said,

"As I am set to part with her, it's base

To make a fool of her, and a disgrace

To her as well, and so I must restore

Her to her kin just as she was before

We wed."

Philotis:

What you tell me of Pamphilus

Shows him to be upright and virtuous.

Parmeno:

"It burdens me to say this, but if we

Should send her home without some calumny 180

Being mentioned, that is most provocative.

I hope, though, when she sees that she can't live

With me, she'll go back anyway.

Philotis:

Did he

Meanwhile still visit Bacchis?

Parmeno:

Constantly.

But once she saw that he was wed and thus
Hands-off, she grew more acrimonious,
As you'd expect.

Philotis:

Indeed.

Parmeno:

That's mainly why

They parted; he began to identify
The traits of both his mistress and the one
He'd wed, and his, and made comparison. 190

The wife, in keeping with a decorous,
Free-born, respectable and virtuous
Lady, bore all his slights and every slur,
Hiding her feelings. He so felt for her,
Constrained, too, by the sheer effrontery
Of Bacchis, that he withdrew gradually
From her and then transferred his love to her
He'd wed, and thus a genial character
They formed together. Meanwhile on Imbros
An old relative of theirs had died: their loss 200
Led to their gaining all his property.

The love-sick Pamphilus unwillingly
Was dragged there by his dad, who left the wife
With his mother, for the old man spends his life
Upcountry, rarely leaving.

Philotis:

What is there

To bar this marriage?.

Parmeno:

Well, there was a fair
Compact between them first for several days.
But meanwhile in a number of strange ways
She started to hate Sostrata, although
They still had never quarrelled.

Philotis:

Yes? And so...?

210

She spurned their conversations, instantly
Walking away from her; thus, finally,
When she could not withstand her anymore,
Pretending that her mother asked her for
Assistance at a sacrifice, she went
Away. A few days later, Sostrata sent
For her with some excuse or other. She
Gave like commands, but no apology
Was sent back to her. Once this had occurred
Quite frequently, "The woman's sick", they heard.
My mistress went to see her instantly,
But no-one let her in. When finally
The old man heard of it, he yesterday
Came back to town and waited straightaway
For Philumena. I do not yet know
What passed between those two, but still I grow
Anxious. I must be going.

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Philotis:

And I, too,

To meet a stranger.

Parmeno:

May the gods bless you

In all of your endeavours.

Philotis:

And I say

Farewell to you.

Parmeno:

And I to you. Good-day.

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ACT II

SCENE I

Laches:

O what a race, what a conspiracy!

All women love and spurn things equally.

Not one of them will differ from the rest,

You'll find – all mothers-in-law will detest

Their daughters-in-law; with like stolidity

All wives oppose their husbands: they must be,

It seems, trained in the same academy where they

Learn obstinacy. Thus I have to say

That Sostrata must be the teacher there.

Sostrata:

Of what I'm guilty of I'm not aware.

240

Laches:

You're not?

Sostrata:

Laches, may Heaven prosper me,

And may we live our lives in unity!

Laches [aside]:

Heaven forbid!

Sostrata:

You soon will be aware,
I'm certain, that your charges are unfair.

Laches:

Unfair? Can there be anything that you
Deserve for those misdeeds of yours? You, who
Have brought disgrace upon your family.
Yourself and me, preparing misery
To rack your son? It's you, besides, who brought
Our friends to enmity because they thought
They could entrust their children to him. You
Alone have brought about this hullabaloo.

250

Sostrata:

I?

Laches:

You, I tell you, woman, who believe
I'm made of stone. Because I rarely leave
The country, do you think that I don't know
What goes on in the city? That's not so:
Of what folk do right here I know much more
Than of the country where I live. Wherefore?
Well, as you are at home, folk speak of me
Abroad. Some time ago I certainly
Learned Philumena hates you – well, that's no
Surprise: indeed if she had not done so,
It would be more surprising yet, although
I did not think that she would ever go
So far as hating the whole family.
If I'd known that, then preferentially
She should have stayed here and you should have gone.
The blame for all these evils lies upon

260

Your head. I went upcountry to comply
With your request and manage all of my
Affairs in order that I might maintain
Your easy lifestyle. I with might and main
Toil beyond measure with what years allow
To me. Since you don't care at all, then how
Can I not be upset?

270

Sostrata:

I'm totally

Guiltless.

Laches:

No, you're to blame especially.

Because you were the only person who
Was here, all blame, Sostrata, falls on you.
You should have taken care of matters here,
For I'd freed you from every other fear.

280

A crone hating a girl is a disgrace:
"It's not my fault," you'll tell me to my face.

Sostrata:

I won't, dear Laches.

Laches:

Well, that pleases me

For my son's sake, but I am certainly
Convinced that no misdeed of yours can show
You in a worse light.

Sostrata:

But how do you know,
Husband, she doesn't feign to dislike me
In order that she may more frequently
Be with her mother?

Look, there's ample proof,
For no-one would let you beneath their roof 290
Just yesterday.

They told me she was ill,
And that was why I was excluded.

Still,
Your traits, I fancy, cause her malady
Beyond all else, and understandably,
For every one of you would wish her son
To marry, and the match you want's the one
That must be made. You have them wed, and then
You see to it that they're sent off again.

SCENE II

Though, daughter, I may claim the liberty
To rule you, yet my sensitivity 300
As a father sways me now to yield to you
And not oppose what you desire to do.

I see Phidippus. Timely met! I'll know
Directly from the man just how things go.
Phidippus, I indulge my family
And won't corrupt them. If you equally
Are of my mind, you'll find it will be more
In both our interests. Now I see that you're

In thralldom to those girls.

Phidippus:

Ha!

Laches:

Yesterday

I went to you for what I had to say 310

About your daughter. You showed me the door

And I left you no wiser than before.

It does not fit you, if this federation

You wish to last, to hide your aggravation.

If we've done wrong, tell me, and we'll acquit

Ourselves of any wrong or pardon it.

You be the judge. But if you're keeping her

Chez vous because she's ill, I think you err

In rightfulness, Phidippus, if you fear

That she won't be attended well right here. 320

Though you're her father, I don't think that you

Can wish her more good fortune than I do,

And on my son's account, who thinks no less

Of her than his own self, I must profess.

You know how it will anger him if he

Becomes aware of this: accordingly

I want her here before he's back again.

Phidippus:

Laches, I know your carefulness and your

Goodwill, and everything you say is true.

Believe me, I am very keen that you 330

Should have her back if I can possibly

Effect it.

Laches:

What's preventing it? Does she
Make any complaints against her husband, then?

Phidippus:

No, not at all – when I began again
With greater emphasis and forcibly
Tried to make her return, she solemnly
Declared that she could not possibly stay
With you as long as Pamphilus was away.
No doubt each has his feelings; naturally
I am indulgent: my own family

340

I cannot thwart.

Laches [to himself]:

Ha! Sostrata!

Sostrata:

Oh! Oh!

Laches:

Is that your final word?

Phidippus:

I reckon so,
At least just for the moment; is there more
That you're solicitous to utter? For
There are some things that I'm obliged to do
Down at the Forum.

Laches:

I will go with you. [exeunt]

SCENE III

Sostrata:

Our husbands hate us women groundlessly

Due to a few who make us seem to be
Worth being treated badly. What I'm now
Accused of by my husband, I can vow 350
I didn't do. But to exonerate
Myself is hard, for people strongly rate
All mothers-in-law as harsh, but that's not me –
I never thought of her differently
Than as my own. I can but speculate
How this has come about. But here I wait,
And I have many reasons certainly
To crave my son's return impatiently.

ACT III

SCENE I

Pamphilus:
No-one's more crossed in love than I, for thus
My life's a mess. Was I solicitous 360
To get back home for this? For anywhere
Else in the wide world I would rather care
To be than here where I would find such woe.
All those who suffer count, before they know
Their pain, that time preceding their distress
As gain.

Parmeno:
Still, as it is, you'll find success
In sooner losing that adversity.
If you had not returned, there'd surely be
A wider breach. But both will now reverse

Your presence, I am sure. You then will hear 370

The facts and thus you'll be their friend once more.

What you had thought would hurt you to the core

Are trifles only.

Pamphilus:

But why comfort me?

Can there be one in all humanity

As woebegone as I? Before I wed,

There had been other women in my bed.

Though I am mum about them, easily

One may see that I've suffered wretchedly;

Yet I'd dared not refuse the woman who

Was forced on me by Father. I withdrew 380

From one – though it was tough – and extricated

My heart-felt love, but once I concentrated

Upon another conquest, I was struck

By one more crisis, and this dreadful luck

May tear me from her, too. And I suspect

My mother or my wife may be subject

To blame. If I find out that this is so,

I'll be more wretched. Duty, Parmeno,

Bids me bear with my mother; furthermore

I'm bound by duty to my wife, who bore 390

So much from me and she has never shown

My wrongs to others. Now something unknown

Must have occurred, though, which has caused somehow

This breach between them that has lasted now

For quite a while.

Parmeno:

It may be trifling,

However, if you have sound reasoning.

What sometimes are the greatest enmities

Do not lead to the greatest injuries.

At certain times while one man well may be

Quite cool and calm, your greatest enemy 400

Will be another man who's full of rage.

What enmities tots of a certain age

Experience for trifling injuries

Because they have weak sensitivities

To manage them! Thus in this selfsame way

These women seem like tots, for they display

Capricious feelings: just one word may be

The tinder for their animosity.

Pamphilus:

Go in and say I'm here now, Parmeno. [a noise is heard at the door]

Parmeno:

What's that?

Pamphilus:

I hear a bustling to and fro. 410

Quiet!

Parmeno:

Come near the door. Did you hear that?

Pamphilus:

Oh, knock it off! [listens] Jumping Jehoshaphat,

I heard a shriek!

Parmeno:

You tell me not to speak

And yet you talk yourself.

Myrrhina [within]:

Pray, do not shriek,

My child.

Pamphilus:

That's Philumena's mother! Oh,
I'm done for!

Parmeno:

Why?

Pamphilus:

Ruined!

Parmeno:

Why??

Pamphilus:

Parmeno,

You're keeping from me some adversity.

Parmeno:

They say your wife feels some anxiety
About something of which I'm not aware.
Maybe that's it.

Pamphilus:

Why did you not take care 420

To tell me? God!

Parmeno:

I can't tell everything

At once.

Pamphilus:

What dreadful thing is happening?

Parmeno:

I don't know.

Pamphilus:

Has a doctor not been sent

To her?

Parmeno:

I don't know.

Pamphilus:

Well, it's time you went

Indoors that I may know immediately

What's up. How will I see the malady

You have, dear wife? Whatever danger you

Are in, beyond a doubt I'll perish, too. [enters the house]

Parmeno [to himself]:

I need not follow him right now, for they

Think badly of us all. Just yesterday 430

They turned Sostrata back. But if she should

Get worse – a situation which I could

In no way wish to happen – principally

For Pamphilus's sake – immediately

They'd say Sostrata's servant had been there

Inside the house, and they would falsely swear

That I had brought upon them much distress,

The illness then acquiring great excess.

My mistress would be blamed, and I would be

Inflicted with a heavy penalty 440

SCENE II

Sostrata:

For some time now I've heard, in grievous fear,

That there is some confusion around here.

I greatly dread Philumena's malady

Is worsening. I beg you, hear my plea,

Aesculapius and Health, that it's not so.

I'll visit her. [enters the house]

Parmeno [coming forward]:

Listen –

Sostrata:

Well?

Parmeno:

You must go.

Sostrata:

Parmeno, what shall I do? Ah, misery!

Will I not be allowed to go to see

Pamphilus' wife when she lies ill next door?

Parmeno:

Don't even send another person for 450

That purpose. Anyone who loves someone

Who dislikes her, in my opinion,

Is doubly wrong – she labours all in vain

While to the other she brings nought but pain.

Parmeno:

Your son, though, saw her.

Sostrata:

What is that you say?

Has Pamphilus arrived?

Parmeno:

He has.

Sostrata:

Hooray!

I thank the gods. I feel rejuvenated

And all my worry has evacuated

My heart.

Parmeno:

That's why I'm loath especially

To let you in, for if the malady

460

Abates at all, she will, I'm sure, when they're

Together, tell him all that they might share

The facts about the discord that began

Between the two of you. But here's the man.

How sad he looks!

Sostrata:

My son, my darling boy!

Pamphilus

My blessings on you, mother!

Sostrata:

Oh, what joy

That you're back safe. How does Philumena fare?

Pamphilus:

She's getting better. [weeps]

Sostrata:

Would that heaven will care

To grant it so! Why weep, then? Why so blue?

Pamphilus:

Mother, all's well.

Sostrata:

But what was that to-do?

470

Say if her illness started suddenly.

Pamphilus:

Indeed it did.

Sostrata:

What is her malady?

Pamphilus:

A fever.

Sostrata:

Intermittent?

Pamphilus:

So they say.

Go in, please, mother. I will not delay

To follow.

Sostrata:

Alright.

Pamphilus:

Run now, Parmeno,

And help the servants with the baggage. Go!

Parmeno:

Why? Are they not cognizant of the way

Into the house themselves?

Pamphilus:

Off! No delay!

SCENE III

Pamphilus:

I cannot find a point from which to tell

Of all my sudden troubles that befell:

480

I saw some, some I heard; accordingly

I ran away most agitatedly.

When I rushed back in extreme agitation

Into the house, full of the expectation

My wife would have a different malady

Than I had first imagined it to be,

The maids saw I'd arrived and with a cry

Of joy yelled out that I had come. But I
 Soon saw their countenances change again
 At this unhappy chance. One of them then 490
 Ran off to tell this news. I came behind,
 Anxious to see my wife, only to find,
 Alas, the nature of her malady.
 For there had been no opportunity
 To hide it. She could barely breathe a sigh.
 "Disgraceful conduct," I exclaimed when I
 Saw this. At once I wept: eager to go,
 I rushed away, distressed at all this woe.
 Her mother followed. At the threshold she
 Fell to her knees and wept. Such sympathy 500
 I had for her! As matters may occur,
 We're sad or happy. Thus I heard from her:
 "Dear Pamphilus, you may now see wherefore
 She left your house – she was abused before,
 When she served as a maid, by someone who
 Was foreign to us, and then, that from you
 And others she might hide her labour, she
 Came here where she could find her sanctuary."
 When I recall her pleas, I can't impede
 My tears. She said, "Whatever chance may lead 510
 You here today, we both, should it be fair
 And right, entreat you never to declare
 Her woes to anyone. You know that she
 Has been disposed to you most tenderly:
 She asks you, therefore, not to hesitate
 But with a willing heart reciprocate
 With this kind favour. But as far as you

Reflect on reinstating her, then do
 Whatever you will – just you know her condition:
 The child created of this parturition 520
 Is none of yours because two months, they say,
 Passed by before the two of you first lay
 Together, and it's seven months since she
 Came to you – all this you may clearly see.
 Now my especial wish is to endeavour
 To make sure that her lying-in is never
 Known by her father or, in fact, by all.
 But if the plan I have in mind should fall
 Apart and they find out, I'll say that she
 Miscarried: for I know undoubtedly 530
 That people will think what *seems* to be true
 And so they will believe the father's you.
 So it will be exposed immediately,
 Thus freeing you of all anxiety.
 And in this way you will be burying
 The rape inflicted on the girl, poor thing."
 This is the promise that I made and do
 Have every aim to keep that promise, too.
 Taking her back, though, isn't, I maintain,
 Worthy. I will not, although I retain 540
 A constant love for her. I'm soon in tears
 When thinking of her life and future years
 Of woe. Inconstant fortune! But my past
 Involvements now have tutored me at last.
 I'll use the means I used some time ago
 To rid me of this, too. Here's Parmeno
 With all the servants. It is far from fit

That he should be here at this time, for it
Was only him I trusted when I told
The secret I'd determined to withhold 550
Myself from her when we were wed. I fear
In case he frequently could get to hear
Her cries and know she's giving birth. For he
Must be sent off till the delivery.

SCENE IV

Parmeno:

Your voyage was unpleasant, did you say?

Sosia:

Oh, Parmeno, I can't in any way

Say how unpleasant.

Parmeno:

Really?

Sosia:

You are blessed

That you don't know how you'd have been distressed

If you had been a traveller on the sea.

Ignoring others, mark this misery 560

Alone: I sailed for thirty days or more

And every moment felt in my heart's core

The fear of death, the weather caused such woe.

Parmeno:

Annoying!

Sosia:

Yes indeed: rather than go

Back there I'd run away.

Parmeno:

Once, Sosia, you
Had but slight reasons causing you to do
What you are threatening now to do. I see
Pamphilus at the door. I'll see if he
Wants anything. Go in the house. [to Pamphilus] I say,
Are you still here, sir? I bid you good-day. 570

Pamphilus:

I am – waiting for you.

Parmeno:

What's up, sir?

Pamphilus:

Well,

You have to hurry to the citadel.

Parmeno:

Who?

Pamphilus:

You.

Parmeno:

Why to the citadel?

Pamphilus:

To see

The man who sailed across the sea with me.

Greet him – his name is Callimenides,

My host in Myconos.

Parmeno [aside]:

Perplexities

Ap! plenty! I would say he made a vow

That if he came home safely he would now

Maim me with walking.

Pamphilus:

Why do you delay?

Parmeno:

What is it you would like for me to say?

580

Or should I merely greet him?

Pamphilus:

No indeed.

Say I can't meet him now, as was agreed,

In case he should wait for me pointlessly.

Go! Quickly!

Parmeno:

But I do not know what he

Looks like.

Pamphilus:

He's ruddy, huge, with curly hair,

Fat, grey-eyed, ghastly.

Parmeno:

This is hardly fair.

What if he doesn't come? Am I to stay

Right there till evening?

Pamphilus:

Yes, you are. Away!

Parmeno:

I can't – I'm tired. [exit]

Pamphilus:

What shall I do now

In such a pickle? I just don't know how

590

I can conceal the girl's delivery,

Just as Myrrhina has entreated me.

I pity her. What I can do, though, I

Shall do, but only if I can stand by
My duty. For it's proper to agree
To serve a parent, not my love. But see –
Phidippus and my father coming here.
I don't know what to say to them. Oh dear! [stands apart]

SCENE V

Laches:

Did I not hear you say to me that she
Expects my son's return?

Phidippus:

You did.

Laches:

Well, he

600

Is here, they say. Let her come back.

Pamphilus [to himself]:

Oh my!

I just don't know how I can justify

My not taking her back.

Laches:

What's that I hear?

Pamphilus [to himself]:

I am determined, then, to persevere

In what I plan.

Laches

The very person who

It was whom I was speaking of to you!

Pamphilus:

Father, good health to you!

Laches:

My son, the same

To you!

Phidippus:

Pamphilus, I am glad you came

Back home again, the more especially so

That you are safe and well.

Pamphilus:

I'm sure I know

610

You are.

Laches:

You've just arrived?

Pamphilus:

Yes.

Laches:

What are we

Bequeathed by Cousin Phania? Tell it me.

Pamphilus:

He was a pleasure-lover: those who live

For pleasure do not have much left to give

Their heirs but for themselves this commendation

They leave: "He lived well."

Laches:

Just one observation

You've brought back? Nothing else?

Pamphilus:

Well, all that he

Has left brings gain to us.

Laches:

Contrarily,

It brings a loss; if I could work my will
I'd have him in good health and living still.

620

Phidippus:

Then wish away, for nothing will revive
The man; given the choice "dead or alive"
I know your preference.

Laches:

Just yesterday

He [pointing to Phidippus] wanted Philumena home. [to Phidippus] Now say
You did.

Phidippus [aside to Laches]:

Don't punch! [to Pamphilus] I did.

Laches:

However, he will now

Send her back home.

Phidippus

Of course.

Pamphilus:

But I know how

It happened. For just now I heard it all
When I arrived.

Laches:

May Heaven's curses fall

On those mean folk who with such readiness
Declare this news.

Pamphilus [to Phidippus]:

I'm sure that no distress

630

Will be delivered by your family
With fitting cause; if I could truthfully
Mention how faithful, intimate and kind

I've been to her I could; but I'm inclined
That you hear it from her, for then you'd be
Apter to place your confidence in me
When she who uses me now as a foe
Speaks well of me. I call the gods to show
That I am not accountable for our split.

However, since she does not think it fit
To yield to Mother, while I'm eager, though,
To yield to *her*, since friendship cannot grow
Between us otherwise, then I must be
Split from my mother or, alternatively,
From Philumena. But my own affection
Leads me to seek my mother's predilection.

Laches:

Good news, my friend! Your mother you esteem
Before all else. Yet do not be extreme,
Moved by resentment.

Pamphilus:

But how could I be
Hostile to one who's never injured me
In any way? Her due she's always earned.
I love and worship her, for I have learned
That she is of a gentle temperament
With me. Would that she truly lives content
With someone who's more fortunate than me
Until she dies, because necessity
Tears her from me.

Phidippus:

You may yourself prevent
That happening.

640

650

Laches:

Be wise and have her sent

Back home.

Pamphilus:

It's not my plan, for I must pay

Attention to my mother's interests. [starts to leave]

Laches:

Stay!

660

Where are you going?

Phidippus:

What obstinacy!

Laches:

Phidippus, did I not tell you that he

Would take this thing amiss? And that is why

I said to send your daughter back.

Phidippus:

Well, I

Did not believe that he would be so grim.

Did he think I would come and plead with him?

If he should take his wife, back, well, okay –

Let him! But if he doesn't, let him pay

The dowry back and leave.

Laches:

Just look at you –

So obstinate and huffish.

Phidippus:

Well, you too

670

Have come back very obstinate.

Laches:

Although

He's reason to be mad, his wrath will go
Away.

Phidippus:

A stroke of luck has come to you
And made you put on airs.

Laches:

So with me, too,
You'll fall out?

Phidippus:

Let him think, and come today
And say if he's decided if she may
Be someone else's wife. [leaves]

Laches:

Hold on while I
Say a few words – He's vanished. Why,
What's that to me? Well, let them, finally,
Sort it all out themselves. For neither he 680
Nor my own son show me appreciation.
They don't care what I say. This altercation
I'll carry to my wife, for it was she
Who caused all these events that trouble me.
Against her I will vent all my vexation,
Revealing thus to her my indignation.

ACT IV

SCENE I

Myrrhina:

I've had it! What am I to do? Which way

To turn? In my distress what can I say
To Phidippus, my husband? I surmise
That he has heard a new-born baby's cries, 690
So suddenly did he rush silently
In to my daughter. What if he should be
Informed that she has given birth? For I
Can't think of one pretext to tell him why
I kept it hidden. What's that noise I hear?
There's someone coming out to me. Oh dear! [enter Phidippus]
Phidippus [to himself]:
My wife observed me when I went inside
To see my daughter, and then off she hied.
But there I see her. [addressing her] So, what have you got
To say? Listen, I'm speaking to you.

Myrrhina:
What, 700
To me, my husband?

Phidippus:
Husband? If I ever
Seemed that, or even a man, I would have never
Been jeered at through your deeds.

Myrrhina:
What deeds are they?

Phidippus:
You ask that? Can't you bring yourself to say
Your daughter bore a child? Are you quite mute?
By whom?

Myrrhina:
Questions like that one don't suit
A father. Such a shocking thing you've said!

Who else but he to whom she has been wed?

Phidippus:

That's what I think as well: a father should

Not think it otherwise. And yet why would 710

You wish to hide the truth, especially

Since she has been delivered properly

And at the right time? Are you so awry

That you would rather wish the child would die

To gain our friendship rather than contend

Your feelings so his wife goes on to spend

Her life with him? I thought the fault to be

Upon their heads, but in reality

It's on your own.

Myrrhina:

I'm lost!

Phidippus:

Would that were true,

But now I realize when I and you 720

Took him as son-in-law, you said to me

You'd not endure our progeny to be

Wed to one attached to a courtesan,

Who spent his nights away.

Myrrhina [aside]:

Well, rather than

The actual reason that was in my mind

I'd have him fancy any other kind

Of reason.

Phidippus:

I myself already knew

He kept a mistress – earlier than you.

But this is natural – it's not a crime
In youths, I think. Indeed there'll come a time 730
When he will hate himself for it. You, too,
No longer show yourself the same as you
Once were. That you might take the girl away
From him and that my deed will not hold sway,
How far you'd like it done one indication
Exists.

Myrrhina:

Can you have such imagination
That I could be thus to a child of mine
If this affiliation should incline
To our advantage?

Phidippus:

How could you foresee
It could be so? You heard it possibly 740
From someone who told you that he'd caught sight
Of him going to his mistress. Well, alright –
If it had been done with diplomacy
And rarely, are we not more kind if we
Ignore it rather than work hard to know
About it, which would make him hate us so?
If he could all at once have gone away
From one with whom he'd been for many a day
I'd not think him a man or qualified
To stay forever by our daughter's side. 750

Myrrhina:

Enough about the young man: what you say
I have been guilty of. Then, go away.
Meet him alone and ask him if he would

Marry the girl or not, and if he should
Say yes, then send him back. If he denies
To wed, I have a plan to organize
The best course for my daughter.

Phidippus:

But if he
Says no and you suspect some villainy
In him, I was at hand, by whose advice
These matters could be settled in a trice. 760
I'm most upset that without my consent
You acted thus. Therefore I will prevent
Your carrying the infant anywhere
Outside. I'd be an idiot though, to dare
Think you'd obey me. So I'll go inside
And tell the servants not to go outside
With it. [enters the house]

Myrrhina:

I am the saddest anywhere
Of any woman. But how he would bear
The truth of it is not unknown to me.
He'll stand the news, though it's nugatory, 770
And he'll be angry. And I do not know
How he can yet be changed. Of all this woe
This one I lacked – that he should pressure me
To rear an infant whose paternity
Is still unknown. For it was very dark
When Philumena was raped – she could not mark
The rapist's features, and she did not take
Anything from him for recognition's sake.
However, he took off and snatched away

A ring she wore. Now I am in dismay 780
If Pamphilus himself cannot suppress
What I cannot upon him now impress,
When he learns that the child of an unknown
Person is being brought up as his own.

SCENE II

Sostrata:

It's not unknown to me, my son, that I
Am thought by you to be the reason why
Your wife has left, although you carefully
Conceal what I have done. Heaven prosper me,
For knowingly I've never merited
The hate she has for me; while I have said 790
That you indeed loved me, you've verified
What I have said, because just now inside
The house your father told me you preferred
Me to your passion. Now I give my word
That I'll return the favour – thus you'll see
The gift of your affection lies with me.
I think, then, that this has an application
To you yourselves and my own reputation.
With Laches I've resolved to go away
Into the country that my presence may 800
Not be a curb and no cause will remain
To keep your wife from coming back again.

Pamphilus:

What plan is this? Has her stupidity
Driven you from the city here to be

A country-dweller? No, I can't permit
Anyone who censures us to say that it
Was done because of my perversity
And not your preference. Additionally,
I do not wish that I may be the one
To have you shun your friends and kin and fun 810
On festive days.

Sostrata:

They give me no delight.
When I was young, I relished them alright,
But now they weary me, while presently
My chief concern is that I may not be
Through age a plague to anyone who may
Be anxious for my death. Here I can say
That I'm disliked, though undeservedly:
I should retire – so it's the best for me
To cut the grounds of the unhappiness
Between us all and be from wariness 820
Unfettered, thereby pleasing everyone.
I beg of you that you will let me shun
Female rebuke.

Pamphilus [aside]:

How happy I would be
In every way but for the fact that *she*
Should be my mother, while the other one
Should be my wife!

Sostrata:

Can you not bear, my son,
Just this one inconvenience you'll find
In every woman? For if in your mind

All's good, then take her back.

Pamphilous:

Ah, woe is me!

Sostrata:

And me! This causes me like misery.

830

SCENE III

Laches:

I heard you chatting with that young man, wife.

Controlling one's emotions in one's life

Is wise when it is needed. And maybe

It's shrewd to do something that finally

You'll have to do.

Sostrata:

I wish that project well.

Laches:

Leave, therefore, for the country, there to dwell.

We'll put up with each other there.

Sostrata:

Indeed

I hope so.

Laches:

Then go in! Take what you need!

Sostrata:

I will. [enters the house]

Pamphilus:

Father!

Laches:

What is it, son?

Pamphius:

Oh no,

She must not go away.

Laches:

Why have it so?

840

Pamphilus:

Because I do not know what I'm to do

About my wife.

Laches:

What do you mean? Don't you

Intend to bring her home?

Pamphilus:

Indeed I do

With all my heart, although I will pursue

My plan, for it's the best one could devise.

For they'll be better settled, I surmise,

If I should take her back.

Laches:

Once she's away,

It will not matter to you anyway.

The young don't like the old: it's right for us

To leave the world behind, dear Pamphilus.

850

Two people in a story-book are we,

"Old man and aged woman", finally.

But coming out I notice Pamphilus.

I'll greet him – this is most felicitous.

SCENE IV

Phidippus [aside]:

I'm angry with you – yes, extremely so –
For you have acted shoddily, although
You have a reason (though there's only one) –
Your mother forced you, but for her there's none.

Laches:

Happily met, Phidippus.

Phidippus:

Tell me why

You're here to talk with me.

Pamphilus [aside]:

Ah, what reply

860

Am I to give to him, or in what way

Am I to hide it?

Laches:

I want you to say

To your daughter Sostrata is leaving here

To live upcountry, so she need not fear

To come back home.

Phidippus:

Your wife attracts no blame

In this affair – no, all the mischief came

From my Myrrhina.

Pamphilus [aside]:

There appears to be

A change of sides.

Phidippus:

Laches, it's really she

Who bears the guilt.

Pamphilus:

So long as I don't take

Her back, all the disturbance she can make

870

Is fine by me.

Phidippus:

I really wish that we

Could have between us timeless unity.

If you think otherwise, though, nonetheless

Accept the child.

Pamphilus [aside]:

Oh, what a dreadful mess!

I fear he's learned of the delivery.

Phidippus:

MY daughter, in a state of pregnancy,

Was taken off. We have a grandson now,

Although before today, to you I vow,

I did not know that she was carrying

A child.

Laches:

Oh Heaven bless us all, you bring

880

Good news. I'm glad of it and happy, too,

She's safe. What sort of woman, though, have you

Wed that for such a long time you'd withhold

This information from us? I can't scold

This conduct with sufficient gravity.

Phidippus

This conduct irritates me equally.

Pamphilus [aside]:

I doubt no longer that another's son

Will go with her.

Laches:

Now nothing can be done

About it all.

Pamphilus [aside]:

I've had it!

Laches [to Pamphilus]:

Frequently

We longed to see the day when you would be 890

Addressed as Father: now at last that day

Has come. I thank the gods.

Pamphilus:

I've had it!

Laches:

Pray

Take home your wife.

Pamphilus:

If she had wanted me

To be the father of her progeny

And wished to be, as she has been, my wife,

She would not have concealed – I'd bet my life

On this – what she concealed. Now, since I find

She spurns me, no contract of any kind

For reconciliation.

Laches:

She has done

Her mother's will in fact. Would anyone 900

Wonder at that? Is any woman free

Of fault, you think? Or can iniquity

Be levelled at us men?

Phidippus:

Alright, you two,

Pamphilus, Laches, what then, should you do?

Leave her or take her back? I have no say
In what your wife may do, and anyway
You'll have no snag with me. But what must we
Do with the child?

Laches:

Ah, such absurdity!

Whatever happens, send it back. We'll rear
The baby as our own.

Pamphius:

What's this I hear? 910

Rear an abandoned child?

Laches:

What's that you said?

Are we, then, to expose the child instead?
Madness! I can't be silent anymore.
For you compel me now to say before
This man [pointing to Phidippus] something that I would rather not.
Do you suppose I'm not aware of what
Has caused your tears and your anxiety?
In the first place, when you alleged to me
Your mother was the reason why your spouse
Could not be settled with you in your house, 920
She said that she would leave. Since you have found
That this guise you've invented has no ground
In truth, because a child was born without
Your knowing of it, you have figured out
Another. You are wrong if you believe
I don't know how you feel. Don't you perceive
How long a period I have allowed
You for your mistress and how I have bowed

To bearing the expense to keep her, too.

I remonstrated and entreated you

930

To marry, for the time was right, I said.

Then, through my exhortation, you were wed.

You acted in obedience to me

As fits you. Now your partiality

Turns to another, whom you gratify

While hurting your first love. For plainly I

Perceive that you've relapsed.

Pamphilus:

What, I?

Laches:

Yes, you,

And thereby you've behaved unjustly, too.

You feign grounds for discord so that you may,

The witness of your deeds safely away,

940

Live with her. And your wife has seen it, too:

Why else would she be set on leaving you?

Phidippus [to himself]:

He's clearly right: that must be it.

Pamphilus:

I vow

None of these is the reason.

Laches:

Take her now!

Go home with her! Or tell the reason why

You shouldn't.

Pamphilus:

Not now – maybe by and by.

Laches:

Then take the child, who is not obviously
At fault. The mother I will presently
Consider.

Pamphius [apart]:

I'm so wretched! I don't know
What I'm to do, and I am troubled so 950
By Father on all sides. I'll go away –
What could I do here? Without my O.K.
They can't bring up my child, especially
Because my mother-in-law will second me. [exit]

Laches:

What, does he run away with no reply?
[to Phidippus] He must be mad. Leave him alone and I
Will rear the child. Give it me.

Phidippus:

Yes, I will.
No wonder that my wife would take it ill.
Women resent such things as these. Thus she
Told me herself about it angrily. 960
I'd not say this to you while he was near:
I doubted her at first but now it's clear –
He is averse to marriage totally.

Laches:

What should I do, then?

Phidippus:

Well, primarily
We ought to see his mistress – let us ask
Her quietly and then take her to task,
Then lastly threaten her most seriously
Not to have dealings with him subsequently.

Laches:

Alright. [to an attendant] Boy, run to Bacchis' house nearby.

Tell her to come here, in my name. [exit attendant] And I 970

Urge you to aid me.

Phidippus:

Well, once more I say

I wish this unity between us may

Endure, and I have hopes that such will be

The case. But when you meet, do you want me

To be with you?

Laches:

Yes, but secure someone

To nurse the child, for that must first be done. [exit Phidippus]

ACT V

SCENE I

Bacchis:

Laches would speak with me – well, I can guess

Wherefore.

Laches [to himself]:

I must not let my peevishness

Hinder my goal or do what I might rue

Later. I'll speak to her. [to Bacchis] Good-day to you,

Bacchis.

Bacchis:

And, Laches, you.

980

Laches:

You wonder why

I sent for you, I think.

Bacchis:

Indeed, and I

Am anxious since I think the occupation

That I am in causes discrimination.

I can defend myself.

Laches:

Well, if that's true,

Woman, there is no jeopardy for you.

For I have reached the age where it's not right

To recognize forgiveness for some slight;

For I am always careful to restrain

From rashness, and therefore should you maintain 990

Your female dignity, then it would be

Wrong of me to inflict an injury

Upon you.

Bacchis:

I should thank you for that thought,

Because a man who, after he has wrought

A sin would then excuse himself, would be

Of little profit to me. But tell me

Why you are here.

Laches:

My Pamphilus you let

Into your house, Bacchis.

Bacchis:

Ah!

Laches:

Hear me yet –

Before he wed, I suffered your affair.

No, stay a while, for you're still unaware 1000

Of what I mean to tell you. Now he's wed,
Seek out a more reliable man instead
While you still have the time to think, since he
Won't always be the same, and you won't be
Forever young.

Bacchis:

And who would ever say
These things?

Laches:

Her mother-in-law – she took away
Her daughter so that she might put an end
To the child in secret.

Bacchis:

If I could defend
Myself by any means but that to swear
A solemn oath to you, I would declare 1010
That I've kept at a distance, since he wed,
Your Pamphilus.

Laches:

I'm pleased at what you've said,
But do you know what I'd prefer you'd do?

Bacchis:

What?

Laches:

Go indoors and swear the oath that you
Just mentioned and convince the women there
That you are innocent and clear the air.

Bacchis:

I will. Another lady of the night,

However, would not do so, I am quite
Assured – go to a wife with such an aim!
I would not have your son receive the blame 1020
On a false allegation nor should he
Appear inconstant undeservedly
To you, for he's deserved the right that I
Should succour him as far as I can try.

Laches:

Your words have made me well-disposed to you.

Not only did they think so, but I, too.

Now I have seen that you're the opposite

Of what I had expected, see that it

Is so that you will be a friend to me:

If otherwise – but I'll make sure to see 1030

That I to you will never be unkind.

One thing, though, I would have you bear in mind –

What I can do through our intimacy,

Not what may happen through our enmity.

SCENE II

Phidippus [to the nurse]:

You'll want for nothing while here you abide:

Your wants will in abundance be supplied.

But once you've fed and drunk your fill, take care

The infant has enough. [nurse enters the house]

Laches:

Bacchis, look there!

Phidippus, my son's father-in-law, I see.

He's brought the nurse. [to Phidippus] Bacchis swears solemnly. 1040

Phidippus:

Is this her?

Laches:

Yes.

Phidippus:

Those women do not fear

The gods, nor do the gods care for them.

Bacchis:

Here,

I freely give my maidservants to you.

Examine them, and, if you think it's due,

Torture them, because my business is right now

Compelling Pamphilus's wife somehow

To come back. If I can, I will not rue

That folk say I'm the only one to do

What other strumpets don't.

Laches:

Phidippus, we

Find that our wives have undeservedly

1050

Been doubted. Therefore let us further seek

The truth of it: your wife will lose her pique

If she discovers she thought to be true

A false indictment, but if Pamphilus, too,

Is feeling angry that his wife was brought

To bed without his knowledge, that is nought.

His anger will with speed evaporate:

No couples thus should ever separate.

Phidippus:

I truly hope so.

Laches:

Test her, then – she's here.

I'm sure that she herself will make things clear. 1060

Phidippus:

Why tell me this? Because you weren't aware

Of how I felt about this whole affair?

Just satisfy their minds.

Laches:

I beg of you,

Bacchis, to do what you have vowed to do.

Bacchis:

You wish me, then, to see to it?

Laches:

Yes, go

And satisfy their minds.

Bacchis:

Alright, although

I'm sure that they won't like it presently

Because a wife's a mistress' enemy

When separated from her spouse.

Laches:

But when

They know the reason why you're there, why, then 1070

They'll be your friends.

Phidippus:

I vow that will be true

Once they have ascertained the reason you

Are there, for, rid of your uncertainty,

You'll also from their error set them free.

Bacchis:

I've had it now, for I'm ashamed to meet

Philumena. [to the attendants] Follow me in.

Laches:

Nothing can beat

The wish that I embraced – to see what she

Has undergone. For she has aided me

With no loss to herself – from Pamphilus

She has withdrawn and has acquired thus

1080

Status and praise; to him the favour she

Returns, and now we'll live in amity.

SCENE III

Parmeno [to himself]:

My master thinks my toil of little weight:

He's sent me off for nothing, so my fate

Has been to sit here all day pointlessly

And linger at the citadel to see

Callimenides, the host from Myconos,

Just like a fool. Each man I came across

I asked: "Are you from Myconos? Tell me, please."

"I'm not." "But is your name Callimenides?"

1090

"No." "Had a former guest of yours the name

Of Pamphilus?" Each answer was the same –

"I think there's no such person." At last I

Took off, ashamed. But how is it I spy

Bacchis now coming through our neighbour's door?

What could it be that she is looking for?

Bacchis:

You have appeared in good time, Parmeno.

Hurry to Pamphilus!

Parmeno:

Why should I go

Thither?

Bacchis:

I want him here.

Parmeno:

What, to your house?

Bacchis:

No – Philumena's, Parmeno, his spouse.

1100

Parmeno:

What's up?

Bacchis:

Don't ask – it's nought to do with you.

Parmeno:

Should I say anything but that?

Bacchis:

Yes, do –

Say that Myrrhina's seen her daughter's ring,

Which he once gave me.

Parmeno:

Is that everything?

Bacchis:

Yes. That'll bring him here. [pause] Do you delay?

Parmeno:

Oh no – there's been no chance for me all day

To do that: not a moment could I spare

With scurrying and walking here and there. [enters Laches' house]

Bacchis:

Today I've brought great joy to Pamphilus

By coming here. Oh, how felicitous

1110

He is! I freed him from so many woes.

I saved his son, who almost, thanks to those
Women and his own self, had passed away;
A wife, to whom he'd thought he'd have to say
Farewell forevermore, has been by me
Returned to him; from the uncertainty
He suffered from Phidippus and Laches
I've cleared him. All of these discoveries
Have through this ring occurred, for I recall
Some ten months past and just before the fall 1120
Of night, he came to my house breathlessly,
Alone, and having drunk excessively.
The ring was in his hand, and I felt fear
At once and I said, "Pamphilus, my dear,
So out-of-breath? Where did you get that ring?"
He feigned at first that he was pondering
Some other question. When I saw that, I
Had my suspicions, though I knew not why
I *should* suspect. I said, "Enlighten me
About the reason you are here." Said he, 1130
"I raped a woman in the street, although
I have to say her name I do not know,
And while she squirmed I took from her this ring."
Myrrhina now has recognized the thing,
Which I was wearing. "Where's it from?" said she.
I told her all. Hence the discovery
Shows it was Philumena and the child
That's just been born to her is his. I'm wild
With joy that I'm the cause of his delight,
Though other ladies of my calling might 1140

Think differently, for we are disinclined
To know a customer of ours may find
Delight in marriage. But I'll never buy
A thing with base deeds. For as long as I
Had got the chance, I found him to be kind
And peaceable and of a generous mind.
The marriage, I confess, turned out to be
Unlucky for me, although, honestly,
I've not done anything to justify
Some injury to me. It's fair that I 1150
Should bear the occasional difficulty
From one who has so often aided me.

SCENE IV

Pamphilus:

Dear Parmeno, give me a true report
And don't allure me to indulge in short
And fleeing joys.

Parmeno:

Right.

Pamphilus:

Sure?

Parmeno:

Sure.

Pamphilus:

If that's so,

I am a god.

Parmeno:

True!

Pamphilus:

Tarry, Parmeno.

I'm frightened that while I believe one thing,

You're telling something else.

Parmeno:

I'm tarrying.

Pamphilus:

You said, I think, Myrrhina has found out

That Bacchis has her ring.

Parmeno:

Yes, there's no doubt.

1160

Pamphilus:

The one I gave to her some time ago.

She said to tell me this?

Parmeno:

Yes, that is so.

Pamphilus:

Who is there who's more bursting with elation

Than I? To pay you for this information

What can I do? I don't know.

Parmeno:

But I do.

Pamphilus:

What?

Parmeno:

Nothing – there's no benefit to you

In what I told you or, indeed, in me.

Pamphilus:

You have delivered me from Purgatory

And could I suffer you to go away

Unrecompensed? Ah, I see what you say –

1170

That I'm ungrateful. Bacchis I can see,
Standing before the door. She waits for me,
I think. I'll speak to her.

Bacchis:

Dear friend, hello!

Pamphilus:

Oh, Bacchis, my preserver! Bacchis, oh!

Bacchis:

This fortunate thing gives me such great delight.

Pamphilus:

The way you've acted gives me every right
To credit you. Your charming qualities
You still retain – thus you can always please
Wherever you go.

Bacchis:

And you, dear friend, possess

Your former character and politesse.

1180

Pamphilus:

You flatter!

Bacchis:

You had reason, Pamphilus,
Loving your wife so much. Before today
I'd never seen her, but I have to say
She seems so genteel.

Pamphilus:

That is very true.

Bacchis:

May the gods bless me!

Pamphilus:

Tell me, then, have you

Told to my father anything of these

Events?

Bacchis:

No.

Pamphilus:

We must keep them from Laches,

Therefore, for there's no need. I do not yearn

For everybody everywhere to learn 1190

The total plot, as in the comedies.

Here, those who ought to know the plot – well, these

Already do; but those who should not know

Will neither hear nor know of it.

Bacchis:

And so

I'll give you proof why it seems easily

Concealed. Myrrhina told Phidippus she

Believed my oath and thus she will excuse

The things that you have done.

Pamphilus:

This is great news:

I hope all turns out well.

Parmeno:

Will you not say,

Master, to me what good I've done today 1200

Or what you're talking of?

Pamphilus:

That may not be.

Parmeno:

"You have restored my soul from Purgatory",

You said. But how?

Pamphilus:

You can't in any way

Know how well you have aided me today.

Parmeno:

Oh no, indeed I am aware, although

I had a plan.

Pamphilus [sarcastically]:

Oh, *that* I surely know.

Bacchis:

Could Parmeno omit, through laxity,

Something that should be done?

Pampilus:

Now follow me.

Parmeno:

I will. Unwillingly I've done more good

Today than ever did I think I could

1210

In all my life before, though then I knew

That I was doing so. [comes forward] Applaud us, do.

